

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 20, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Pamela Tworig, Kurt Gamari and Marie Kelly-Whitney.

Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Deborah Righi, James Righi and Christopher Vadnais.
Luke McKay, Dog Officer.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. There was additional correspondence added to the agenda. There were no changes to the order.

OPEN MOWING BIDS

The board received one bid from Yard Work by Dan to mow, trim and clean off clippings at the rate of \$170.00 each time. Two bid requests were returned undelivered: Casey Cooke and Western Massachusetts Property Maintenance. Nancy Bushika stated that no one showed up for the site visit. The board discussed the spring cleanup. There are a few chunks of sod displaced from plowing and sticks in the front and along ditch/fence line on the north side. Dave Tatro said the highway department used to do the spring cleanup when the school used to hire a cleaning service. Once Rich Cristofolini became the custodian, he took care of all the spring cleanup. Last year the school custodian didn't do it so Dave Tatro and Mike Brothers took care of it. Pam Tworig questioned whose responsibility it is. The board discussed asking the mowing contractor to do it or asking the school principal about having the custodian clean up the yard.

MOTION by Pam Tworig, in the interest of getting work done that cannot wait, to contact Yard Work by Dan to request a price to rake out the areas in the front yard, replace the sod chunks, and clean up along the north fence line. If the estimate is less than \$500.00, the contractor will be authorized to proceed.

SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. 4 in favor (Mike Denault abstained). Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the bid from Yard Work by Dan to mow the Stamford School yard at the rate of \$170.00 per mowing for the 2023 season. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. 4 in favor (Mike Denault abstained). Motion APPROVED.

JOINT SELECTBOARD/SCHOOLBOARD MEETING

The board discussed the importance of meeting with the School Directors. Several large items in the school building need to be repaired and it may be more feasible for the town to obtain the grant over the school. Mike Denault would like to have agenda items so decisions could be made at these meetings. Kurt Gamari, the school liaison, will talk to the chair of the School Board and ask them to have grounds maintenance added to their next agenda and some Selectboard members will attend. Nancy Bushika was asked to work with the School Board to set up a joint meeting. Mike Denault would like to have each board prepare a list of ideas for discussion and then prioritize the list and begin making decisions, one by one.

DESIGNATION OF DVFIBER REPRESENTATIVE

CJ Vadnais expressed an interest in being appointed as an alternate town representative. Bob Briggs would like to remain the town representative and Bill Levine would like to be the first alternate representative.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Bob Briggs as the DV Fiber town representative, Bill Levine as first alternate representative and CJ Vadnais as second alternate representative. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 6, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #15 \$ 8,591.58 payroll

WARRANT #16 \$146,584.89 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

The Selectboard reviewed and confirmed financial statements for the months of January, February and March.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The road crew has been out spreading gravel and grading the roads. They will continue to grade as the weather permits.
2. Dave Tatro has contacted the sweeper to schedule the spring road cleanup.
3. The town has applied for a grant to resurface East Road.
4. The 2019 Freightliner has been repaired.
5. Marie Kelly-Whitney said the highway department did an excellent job on Mill Road. It looks great.
6. Dave Tatro stated that the Class 4 roads don't open until May 1st and there will probably be a lot of storm damage to take care of.
7. The chimney at the garage has not been repaired yet.
8. The board signed the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Letter of Intent for FYE 2024.

RECYCLING

1. The summer hours at the recycling center will begin this Wednesday April 26th from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
2. Carol Fachini asked if the board would consider allowing two recycling monitors to work on Wednesdays during the summer like they do on Saturdays. In the past the recycling monitors rotate working individually on Wednesdays. The board estimated the additional cost and Pam Tworig was concerned about spending the money. Marie Kelly-Whitney offered to visit the transfer station for the next couple of Wednesdays to see how busy it is. Bill Levine stated that Carol Fachini is a very hard worker and if she is asking for help, it is a legitimate request that the board should consider.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. North Adams was the only city in the state that opened their emergency shelter due to the recent snow storm.
2. The Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) in North Adams will be conducting active shooter drills in May. Bill Levine will ask if they can include the Stamford School staff in the drill.
3. The Local Emergency Management Plan is being updated. A final copy when approved will be given to the Bennington County Regional Commission and Bill Levine would like a courtesy copy to be sent to the REPC in North Adams.
4. Mike Denault thanked Paul Ethier and Stewart Johnson for offering the CPR training to the Selectboard and town office staff. They did a great job. Bill Levine ordered two new CPR masks for the automatic external defibrillator kits.
5. Lori Shepard spent a considerable amount of time updated the 911 listing and the Fire Department Run Book.
6. Allison Strohl from the Bennington County Regional Commission has been working with the town to

update the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The town clerk received an email saying she is leaving the BCRC and her replacement will help the town with the plan update this summer.

7. Nancy Bushika was talking to Paul Ethier about the Fire Department vehicles. He will offer a session on either May 8th or May 15th to show each vehicle and explain what each truck does.

8. The Fire Department has an aging population. They offer a Junior Volunteer Fire Program to recruit new members. It would be great to get more people involved.

DOG ORDINANCE

The board reviewed the final draft and made a few changes. The final draft will be approved at the next meeting.

DOG LICENSE FEE

MOTION by Mike Denault to levy the optional \$10.00 surcharge on both the intact and neutered/spayed dog fees beginning with the 2024 licensing season. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

TOWN WEBSITE

Pam Tworig suggested the board put Marie Kelly-Whitney in charge of fixing the website. Marie Kelly-Whitney would like to see more notices and events in town. She enjoyed the bantering on the Facebook site Stamford Informed. The board agreed that would violate open meeting laws. Pam Tworig and Carolyn Brooks feel it should have a better welcome page. Marie Kelly-Whitney feels the website should be a go-to place, similar to a bulletin board, with events and happenings in town. Mike Denault and Nancy Bushika recalled that when the website was created, they limited posting to town or government business only. Something like the senior luncheon at the church or other organizations that hold events, even in Stamford, have not been put on the website. Marie Kelly-Whitney will investigate the websites for other nearby towns. She will meet with the town clerk next week and will be given administrative rights to take over the website postings in accordance with the Website Policy. The Selectboard agreed there was no need to revise the Website Policy.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to approve the uniform municipal excess weight permit application from Riggs Distler & Company, Inc. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

The accident on Jepson Road caused damage to a portion of the guardrails in the area and the guardrail replacement cost was \$4,000.00. Our VLCT insurance representative recommended the town accept the driver's insurance company's property loss check in the amount of \$3,636.36, after depreciation was applied. The Selectboard rejected that offer and will request the full replacement cost of \$4,000.00.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Pam Tworig would like to open discussions with the Readsboro Selectboard regarding combined patrol hours with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department. Kurt Gamari still believes the cost is not sustainable. Mike Denault would like to see the full amount of the sheriff's cost as a warrant article instead of in the budget. He will contact the Readsboro Selectboard.

2. The board thought putting up solar activated speed signs might slow traffic and be much less expensive than the sheriff.

TRASH RECEPTICLES

Marie Kelly-Whitney has talked to one of the residents who was leaving their trash bin in the town's right-of-way. They didn't realize the problem and won't put it there anymore. She will continue to contact the other resident.

FIRE ENGINE LOAN

Paul Ethier forwarded the contact information for the USDA Rural Development loan program. The town clerk will request the application forms. Bill Levine noted that the Fire Department did not qualify for the grant program because our average town income was too high. He feels several of the town's low income residents do not file income taxes and that affects the town average. He stated that if everyone filed their income taxes it would help in the future.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Marie Kelly-Whitney
Clerk

/las

REMINDERS

1. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed by April 1st of each year. State law requires a valid rabies vaccination certificate to be filed with the Town Clerk's office. Licensing your dog is very easy. Rabies certificates can be faxed to the town office at 802-694-1636 or emailed to the town office at townclerk@stamfordvt.net. Once the current rabies certificate is on file, license renewals can be handled in person, by mailing a check, by utilizing the mail slot in the back wall of the town office or by telephone with a credit card. License fees are \$9.00 for each spayed/neutered dog or \$13.00 for each intact dog. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Stamford.
2. The town office is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays.